

I. TALENT WAS A HUGE AMOUNT OF MONEY

A. Think of being told to manage five investment portfolios, or two, or even one

B. Those who managed well what was given to them (like the worthy wife in the first reading), were greatly blessed

1. The Master double-downed on them

2. Gave them twice as much to manage

3. The one who did not manage well, basically squandered what was shared with him and reaped penalties rather than reward

II. WE ARE THOSE STEWARDS

A. And God, the wealthy landowner in the parable, possesses limitless wealth

B. And there is no limit to what God shares with us

C. What God shares with us is nothing less than God's divine Life

1. God lavishes on us divine Life (we call it grace, if you will)

2. God's Life isn't a quantity to be measured, however, like talents

3. God's Life is a relationship that can never be exhausted

4. We can never have "sufficient" talents

5. But we are always called to increase what we have

6. The curious thing about God's generosity with divine Life is that the richer in it we become, the more likely we are to be faithful in the small matters so we can grow in what we already have

D. We will be judged by how we have chosen to allow this Life to increase, to grow within us

E. To choose otherwise is to bury our very selves

III. GOD'S LIFE WITHIN US HAS ENORMOUS POTENTIAL

- A. We are to grow into the rich persons God intends us to be**
- B. In our everyday living of the Gospel we can be fearful or lazy**
- C. We can be safe**
- D. We can do what is minimally necessary**
 - 1. Go to Mass**
 - 2. Maybe go to confession**
 - 3. Say our daily prayers**
 - 4. But take no risks**
- E. Real growth in our potential and in the Life God has given us comes in taking risks**
 - 1. Not foolish, careless risks**
 - 2. That imperil us or others physically**
 - 3. But what I would call spiritual risks**
 - 4. Like the risk of dying to self**
- F. We risk dying to self and increasing our Life when we see someone we don't know who is poor and in need and we still reach out to him or her**
- G. We risk dying to self and increasing our Life when we share our own "talents" by volunteering for a liturgical ministry or for one of the service opportunities in our parish or neighborhood, even if we feel others may be more qualified**
- H. We risk dying to self and increasing our Life by sharing our abundance with others who are less fortunate**
- I. Those who do not choose to nurture the divine Life given to them will bring upon themselves the judgment of losing their very selves**
 - 1. A piano student who does not practice will not grow into a proficient musician**

2. Parents who do not invest time and energy in the formation of their children from birth onward curtail their growth in values and acceptable behaviors

3. A gardener who does not water plants often and early stunts their growth and can even kill them

J. In today's gospel parable directing our attention to the end times and final judgment, Jesus challenges us to choose daily to increase the incalculable riches – God's very Life – God has given us

1. This requires us to choose

a) *Trust over fear*

b) *Good over wickedness*

c) *Disciplined work over laziness*

2. Jesus challenges us to be faithful servants who choose to allow this Life to increase, to grow within us

3. To choose otherwise is to bury our very selves

IV. THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TELLS US:

A. "Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him.

1. "It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life.

2. "We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls.

3. "We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us.

4. "It is not ours to dispose of"

B. So, again, what are the riches God has given us?

1. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, union with Christ in his Body, adoption as God's children and heirs of the kingdom

2. What does it mean to increase these riches?

a) *To invest in bringing goodness and love to others*

b) To expend energy making God's Presence in the world evident

c) To reach out to anyone in need

3. What reward do we receive?

a) Even more of God's Life

b) Even a greater bond of unity with Christ and others

c) We find our very selves

d) And we become what we receive here

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